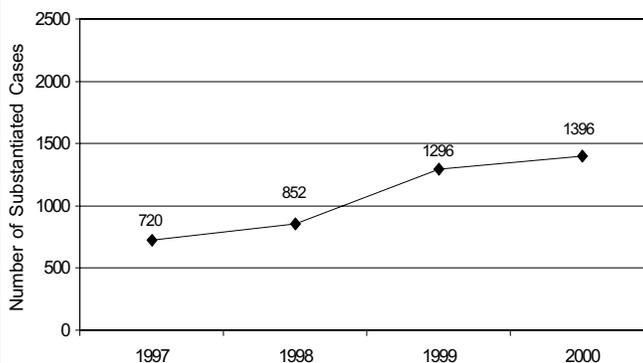


Focus on Community Violence

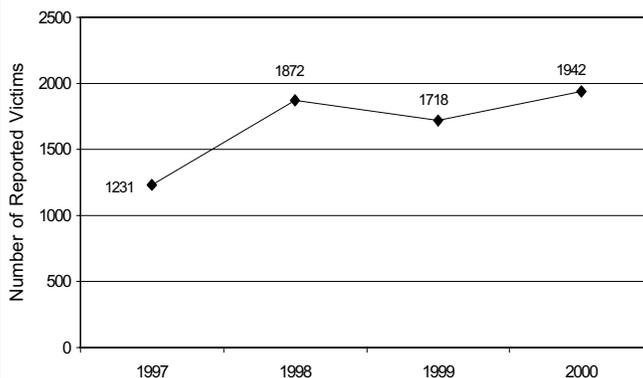
The Community HealthWatch report cards are developed by the Kent County Health Department to report on the status of health priorities being monitored in the Kent County community by Healthy Kent 2010. This report card focuses on violence, specifically child abuse and neglect, victims of domestic violence, and homicide. In 1995, two Healthy Kent subcommittees were convened to establish goals to reduce and prevent violence in Kent County; ultimately these groups merged and formed the Kent County Violence Prevention Coalition. Today, eight Violence Prevention Coalition "Action Teams" deal with violence-related issues and programs ranging from youth violence to elder abuse and neglect. The Violence Prevention Coalition is currently working to educate faith-based groups about domestic violence, and to raise awareness and increase access to help for victims who are Hispanic.

Child Abuse and Neglect



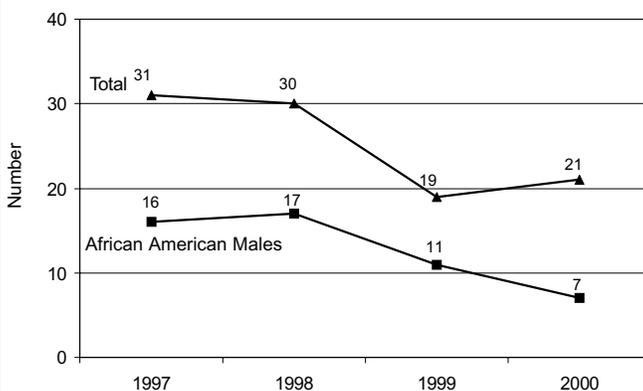
Focused attention on child abuse and neglect led to passage of a Michigan law that imposes stricter penalties for failing to report **child abuse and neglect** by mandated reporters (e.g., health care providers, teachers). The Kent County Family Independence Agency has reported steady increases in both complaints and investigations every year since 1996, while the number of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect has more than doubled since 1995.

Domestic Violence



The number of **reported victims of domestic violence** has increased by 58% in the last four years in Kent County. New laws, however, seek to provide additional protections for these victims: people in dating relationships will now be covered under the law, personal protection orders from other states will be enforced in Michigan, and a fingerprint database of persons arrested for domestic violence will be instituted.

Homicide



The number of **homicides** in Kent County has decreased 32% since 1997. Although African American males continue to be overrepresented as victims of homicide, positive trends have been observed. Homicide has declined among African American males overall. In addition, while African American males accounted for over 50% of homicides in 1997 and 1998, they accounted for 33% in 2000.